

104TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 86

To establish a commission to examine the costs and benefits, and the impact on voter turnout, of changing the deadline for filing Federal income tax returns to the date on which Federal elections are held.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 4, 1995

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To establish a commission to examine the costs and benefits, and the impact on voter turnout, of changing the deadline for filing Federal income tax returns to the date on which Federal elections are held.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Voter Turnout
5 Enhancement Study Commission Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

1 (1) the right of citizens of the United States to
2 vote is a fundamental right;

3 (2) Federal, State, and local governments have
4 a duty to promote the exercise of the right to vote
5 to the greatest extent possible;

6 (3) the power to tax is only guardedly granted
7 to Federal, State, and local governments by the citi-
8 zens of the United States;

9 (4) the only regular contact that most Ameri-
10 cans have with their government consists of filing
11 personal income tax returns and voting in Federal,
12 State, and local elections;

13 (5) in 1992, almost 115,000,000 Federal in-
14 come tax returns were filed by individuals and cou-
15 ples, but only approximately 104,000,000 votes were
16 cast in the year's presidential election; and

17 (6) more closely tying the rights of individuals
18 as voters to their obligations as taxpayers will pro-
19 vide additional incentives for individuals to both par-
20 ticipate in the electoral process and scrutinize the
21 costs and benefits of government policies.

22 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.**

23 There is established a commission to be known as the
24 Voter Turnout Enhancement Study Commission (in this
25 Act referred to as the "Commission").

1 **SEC. 4. MEMBERSHIP.**

2 (a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission
3 shall be composed of 9 members appointed as follows:

4 (1) 3 members appointed by the President.

5 (2) 3 members appointed by the President pro
6 tempore of the Senate, upon the joint recommenda-
7 tion of the majority leader and the minority leader
8 of the Senate.

9 (3) 3 members appointed by the Speaker of the
10 House of Representatives, upon the joint rec-
11 ommendation of the Speaker and the minority leader
12 of the House of Representatives.

13 (b) POLITICAL AFFILIATION.—Not more than 2 of
14 the 3 members of the Commission appointed under any
15 1 paragraph of subsection (a) may be of the same political
16 party.

17 (c) TIME OF APPOINTMENT.—Members of the Com-
18 mission shall be appointed not later than 30 days after
19 the date of the enactment of this Act.

20 (d) TERMS.—Members of the Commission shall be
21 appointed to serve for the life of the Commission.

22 (e) VACANCIES.— Any vacancy in the Commission
23 shall be filled in the same manner as the original appoint-
24 ment.

25 (f) COMPENSATION.—

1 (1) RATE OF PAY.—Except as provided in para-
2 graph (2), members of the Commission shall serve
3 without pay.

4 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the
5 Commission shall be entitled to receive travel ex-
6 penses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as
7 authorized by section 5703 of title 5, United States
8 Code, for persons employed intermittently in the
9 Government service.

10 (g) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the
11 Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser num-
12 ber of members may hold a hearing.

13 (h) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The
14 Commission shall select a Chairperson and Vice Chair-
15 person from among its members.

16 (i) MEETINGS.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall meet
18 at the call of the Chairperson or a majority of its
19 members.

20 (2) INITIAL MEETING.—The Commission shall
21 hold its initial meeting not later than 30 days after
22 the date on which all members of the Commission
23 have been appointed.

1 **SEC. 5. DUTIES.**

2 (a) STUDY.—The Commission shall conduct a com-
3 prehensive study of all matters relating to the possibility
4 of changing the filing date for Federal income tax returns
5 to the 1st Tuesday after the 1st Monday in November.
6 The study shall include an analysis of—

7 (1) the costs and benefits of the change in filing
8 date; and

9 (2) the likelihood that establishment of a single
10 date on which individuals can fulfill obligations of
11 citizenship as both electors and taxpayers will in-
12 crease participation in Federal, State, and local elec-
13 tions.

14 (b) CONSULTATION.—The Commission shall consult
15 with Governors, Federal and State election officials, the
16 Commissioner of Internal Revenue, and any other person,
17 agency, or entity that the Commission determines to be
18 appropriate.

19 **SEC. 6. POWERS.**

20 (a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold the hear-
21 ings, sit and act at the times and places, take the testi-
22 mony, and receive the information that the Commission
23 considers advisable to carry out the purposes of this Act.

24 (b) MAILS.—the Commission may use the United
25 States mails in the same manner and under the same con-
26 ditions as any other Federal department or agency.

1 (c) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any mem-
2 ber or agent of the Commission may, if authorized by the
3 Commission, take any action that the Commission is au-
4 thorized to take under this section.

5 (d) REQUESTS FOR OFFICIAL INFORMATION.—The
6 Commission may request from a Federal department or
7 agency information necessary to enable the Commission
8 to carry out this Act. The head of the department or agen-
9 cy shall provide the information to the Commission unless
10 release of the information to the public by the agency is
11 prohibited by law.

12 **SEC. 7. STAFF ASSISTANCE FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.**

13 Upon the request of the Commission or the Chair-
14 person of the Commission, the head of any Federal depart-
15 ment or agency may detail any of the personnel of the
16 department or agency to the Commission to assist the
17 Commission to carry out this Act.

18 **SEC. 8. REPORT.**

19 Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment
20 of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the President
21 and the Congress a report that contains—

22 (1) a detailed statement of the findings and
23 conclusions of the study required by section 5; and

1 (2) recommendations of the Commission re-
2 garding any legislation or administrative action the
3 Commission considers appropriate.

4 **SEC. 9. TERMINATION.**

5 The Commission shall terminate upon the submission
6 of the report required by section 8.

7 **SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

8 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
9 as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

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